

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method of forwarding a communication in a telecommunications system from a called address to a forwarding address, comprising ~~the steps of:~~

designating the forwarding address;

receiving ~~the~~ a non-audio formatted communication directed to the called address;

routing the non-audio formatted communication to a central forwarding repository;

at the central forwarding repository, converting the non-audio formatted communication to an audio formatted communication;

saving the audio formatted communication at the central forwarding repository; and

routing the audio formatted communication from the central forwarding repository to the forwarding address.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, further comprising ~~the step of:~~ retrieving the audio formatted communication from the central forwarding repository.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 2, further comprising ~~whereby~~ prior to ~~the step of~~ retrieving the audio formatted communication from the central forwarding repository, receiving a personal identification number for authenticating a retrieving party.

4-6 (Canceled)

7. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 6 1, wherein ~~the step of~~ receiving a the non-audio formatted communication includes receiving a facsimile transmission.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 6 1, wherein ~~the step of~~ receiving a the non-audio formatted communication includes receiving an electronic message.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein ~~the step of~~ designating the forwarding address includes designating a forwarding telephone directory number for receiving the communication.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, further comprising ~~the step of~~:
at the central forwarding repository, capturing caller identification information for the communication.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 10, wherein ~~the step of~~ routing the audio formatted communication from the central forwarding repository to the forwarding address includes providing identification information for the audio formatted communication at the forwarding address.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 11, wherein ~~the step of~~ providing identification information includes providing an audio-formatted facsimile transmission header message.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 11, wherein ~~the step of~~ providing caller identification information further comprises ~~the step of~~ providing an audio-formatted source address for an electronic message.

14. (Currently Amended) A method of forwarding an electronic message in a telecommunications system, comprising ~~the steps of~~:

designating a forwarding address for the electronic message;
receiving the electronic message directed to a subscriber address;
routing the electronic message to a central forwarding repository;
at the central forwarding repository, converting the electronic message
from a text formatted message to an audio formatted message;
saving the audio formatted message at the central forwarding repository;
and
routing the audio formatted message from the central forwarding
repository to the forwarding address.

15. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 14, further comprising ~~the step~~
~~of~~:

at the central forwarding repository, converting a source address for the
electronic message from a text formatted address to an audio formatted address; and
routing the text formatted address to the forwarding address with the
electronic message.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 14, further comprising ~~the step~~
~~of~~:

receiving the audio formatted message at the forwarding address.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 16, further comprising ~~the step~~
~~of~~:

retrieving the audio formatted message from the central forwarding
repository.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 17, ~~whereby~~ further comprising
~~prior to the step of~~ retrieving the audio formatted message from the central forwarding

repository, receiving a personal identification number for authenticating a retrieving party.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 14, wherein ~~the step of~~ designating the forwarding address includes designating a forwarding telephone directory number for receiving the audio formatted message.

20. (Currently Amended) A method of forwarding a facsimile transmission in a telecommunications system, comprising ~~the steps of~~:

- designating a forwarding address for the facsimile transmission;
- receiving the facsimile transmission directed to a subscriber address;
- routing the facsimile transmission to a central forwarding repository;
- at the central forwarding repository, converting the facsimile transmission from an image formatted transmission to an audio formatted transmission;
- saving the audio formatted transmission at the central forwarding repository; and
- routing the audio formatted transmission from the central forwarding repository to the forwarding address.

21. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 20, further comprising ~~the step of~~:

- receiving the audio formatted transmission at the forwarding address.

22. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 20, wherein ~~the step of~~ converting the facsimile transmission from an image formatted transmission to an audio formatted transmission includes~~[[,]]~~:

- converting only an address header message of the facsimile transmission to an audio formatted transmission;

retaining a body portion of the facsimile transmission as an image formatted transmission; and

~~whereby the step of~~ wherein routing the audio formatted transmission from the central forwarding repository to the forwarding address includes routing only the audio formatted address header to the forwarding address, and retaining the image formatted body portion of the facsimile transmission at the central forwarding repository.

23. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 22, further comprising ~~the step of~~:

retrieving the audio formatted transmission from the central forwarding repository.

24. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 23, ~~whereby~~ further comprising prior to ~~the step of~~ retrieving the audio formatted transmission from the central forwarding repository, receiving a personal identification number for authenticating a retrieving party.

25. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 22, wherein ~~the step of~~ designating the forwarding address includes designating a forwarding telephone directory number for receiving the audio formatted message.

26. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 22, further comprising ~~the step of~~ forwarding the audio-formatted transmission to a second forwarding address.

27. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 26, wherein the second forwarding address comprises a facsimile receiving device.

28. (Currently Amended) A method of forwarding communications in a telecommunications system, comprising ~~the steps of~~:

designating telephone calls, facsimile transmissions, or electronic messages received at a specified address to be forwarded to a forwarding address;
routing the telephone calls, facsimile transmissions, and electronic messages received at the specified address to a central forwarding repository;
at the central forwarding repository, converting the electronic messages from text formatted messages to audio formatted messages;
at the central forwarding repository, converting the facsimile transmissions from image formatted transmissions to audio formatted transmissions;
saving the telephone calls, audio formatted facsimile transmissions, and audio formatted electronic messages at the central forwarding repository; and
routing the telephone calls, the audio formatted messages, and the audio formatted facsimile transmissions from the central forwarding repository to the forwarding address for receipt by a forwarding party.

29. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 28, further comprising ~~the step of~~:
retrieving the telephone calls, the audio formatted messages, and the audio formatted facsimile transmissions from the central forwarding repository.

30. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 29, whereby further comprising prior to ~~the step of~~ retrieving the communication from the central forwarding repository, receiving a personal identification number for authenticating a retrieving party.

31. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 28, wherein ~~the step of~~ designating telephone calls, facsimile transmissions, and electronic messages received at a specified address to be forwarded to a forwarding address includes designating a forwarding telephone directory number as the forwarding address.

32. (Currently Amended) A system for forwarding a communication in a telecommunications system from a called address to a forwarding address, comprising:
a switch operative
to receive a forwarding address designation;
to receive ~~the~~ a non-audio formatted communication directed to the called address;
to route the non-audio formatted communication to a central forwarding repository;
the central forwarding repository operative
to convert the non-audio formatted communication to an audio formatted communication;
to save the audio formatted communication; and
to route the audio formatted communication to the forwarding address.

33. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim 32, ~~whereby~~ wherein the central forwarding repository is further operative
to receive a personal identification number for authenticating a retrieving party; and
to provide the saved audio formatted communication to the retrieving party upon authentication of the retrieving party.

34. (Canceled)

35. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim ~~34~~ 32, ~~whereby~~ wherein the central forwarding repository is further operative
to receive a facsimile transmission; and
to convert the facsimile transmission from an image format to an audio format for routing to the forwarding address.

36. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim ~~34~~ 32, ~~whereby~~ wherein the central forwarding repository is further operative

- to receive an electronic message; and
- to convert the electronic message from an image format to an audio format for routing to the forwarding address.

37. (New) A method of forwarding a facsimile transmission in a telecommunications system, comprising:

- designating a forwarding address for the facsimile transmission;
- receiving the facsimile transmission directed to a subscriber address;
- routing the facsimile transmission to a central forwarding repository;
- at the central forwarding repository, converting only an address header of the facsimile transmission to an audio formatted transmission;
- retaining a body portion of the facsimile transmission as an image formatted transmission;
- saving the audio formatted transmission at the central forwarding repository;
- routing only the audio formatted address header to the forwarding address;

and

- retaining the image formatted body portion of the facsimile transmission at the central forwarding repository.

38. (New) The method of Claim 37, further comprising:

- retrieving the audio formatted transmission from the central forwarding repository.

39. (New) The method of Claim 38, further comprising prior to retrieving the audio formatted transmission from the central forwarding repository, receiving a personal identification number for authenticating a retrieving party.

40. (New) The method of Claim 37, wherein designating the forwarding address includes designating a forwarding telephone directory number for receiving the audio formatted message.

41. (New) The method of Claim 37, further comprising forwarding the audio-formatted transmission to a second forwarding address.

42. (New) The method of Claim 41, wherein the second forwarding address comprises a facsimile receiving device.